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OCT 30 1996

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
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96-45

October 30, 1996

## MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Joint Board

From: Linda G. Roberts *LR*  
Director, Office of Educational Technology

Subject: Definition of Low Income and High-Cost Rural Schools

During the October 17th hearing on Universal Service, the Joint Board asked for further information about poverty indicators and geographic data to identify schools that are in high-cost rural areas. While there is data available on both subjects, the data collection process will require time. We will continue to work with the states and the National Center on Educational Statistics to provide the Joint Board with as much analysis as possible. We have attached two tables that identify the distribution of low-income schools and schools in rural areas. As you can see, Table I shows that roughly one-third of all students who are eligible for free or reduced priced lunch are enrolled in schools that have 40 percent-plus of their total enrollment eligible for free or reduced priced lunch. Clearly, these are schools with deep pockets of poverty. Table II shows that over 25 percent of schools are located in rural areas.

In addition I would like to point out that the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reports that, while half of all schools had Internet access in 1995, the recent NCES study found that "only 31 percent of schools with large proportions of students from "poor" families had access to the Internet." The same report notes that only 9 percent of all classroom are wired for Internet access.

The Secretary urges members of the Joint Board to recognize that our nation's schools are facing record enrollment pressures and will continue to feel those pressures for the next ten years. Total public and private school enrollment will rise from 51.7 million this year -- a new national record - - to 54.6 million in the year 2006. Approximately, one third of these students are poor. Enrollment pressures are particularly acute for the states of California, Texas, Washington, Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina, New Jersey and Florida. California alone will need to find classrooms for over one million additional children in the next ten years.

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To maintain current K-12 student service levels we are projecting that the nation will need to hire an additional 190,000 teachers, build 6,000 more schools and allocate approximately \$15 billion in additional annual operating expenditures. The Secretary remains concerned that many schools will be unable to fully access needed telecommunications services given these other fiscal pressures at a time when telecommunications offers many students the opportunity for more individualized instruction.

### **Low-Income Schools**

There are two current indicators that can be used to identify low-income schools-- the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch or the percentage of students eligible for Title I programs.

Table I provides a state-by-state account of the number of schools by percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch. The data in Table I accounts for 80,743 schools; note that for 5,675 did not report. These data not reported are available from the states and schools and will be gathered with additional time. Table I shows the distribution of schools from low (0-10 %) to high percentage (40+%) of free or reduced price lunch students. It is important to note that for grades 7-12 the number of students participating in free or reduced price lunch drops dramatically due to social and peer pressure reasons, not economic reasons. Therefore, any benchmark for determining low-income schools based on free lunch or reduced price lunch should have a lower threshold for grades 7-12.

Another indicator for identifying low-income schools is the percent of students eligible for Title I services. Title I eligibility data is maintained and administered by states and school districts; therefore, individual states would have to supply the data. The Council of Greater City Schools filed an explanation of how Title I data could be used.

In addition, in the weeks ahead, new data will be available. In December 1996, the U.S. Census Bureau will have new data on poverty for children, ages 5-17 by local school districts. I look forward to working with the Board to further consider how to define low-income and high cost areas.

### **Rural Schools**

Table II provides a state-by-state account of the number of public schools by locale code. The Department of Education tracks the school data by large city schools, mid-size city, urban fringe, large towns, small towns, and rural towns.

TABLE I

Number of public schools by state and by quartile distribution of the percentage of enrollment which is free and reduced-priced lunch eligible: Fall 1993

State	Not reporting	0-10%	10-20%	20-30%	30-40%	>40%	Total
United States	5,675	10,475	11,445	10,232	9,541	33,375	80,743
Alabama	52	20	134	177	102	788	1,273
Alaska	115	49	60	49	27	178	478
Arizona	101	64	100	110	176	506	1,057
Arkansas	7	39	95	178	153	611	1,083
California	680	711	858	764	1,093	3,213	7,319
Colorado	181	237	153	125	125	508	1,329
Connecticut	113	367	125	161	61	137	964
Delaware	0	5	31	53	46	34	169
District of Columbia	5	0	2	10	0	142	159
Florida	127	175	271	212	190	1,373	2,348
Georgia	103	157	134	243	257	829	1,723
Hawaii	0	17	51	49	43	75	235
Idaho	33	28	83	93	123	213	573
Illinois	294	870	482	422	374	1,443	3,885
Indiana	83	213	416	493	76	588	1,869
Iowa	49	79	276	290	315	468	1,517
Kansas	45	150	169	252	248	587	1,451
Kentucky	43	62	92	130	196	804	1,327
Louisiana	102	24	103	59	120	1,040	1,448
Maine	102	62	54	76	89	338	721
Maryland	25	327	213	141	143	336	1,185
Massachusetts	81	569	430	136	126	348	1,690
Michigan	156	685	248	657	363	1,049	3,159
Minnesota	130	198	294	156	210	505	1,493
Mississippi	74	24	27	47	87	699	958
Missouri	70	209	340	335	166	962	2,082
Montana	174	67	112	179	72	292	896
Nebraska	387	94	150	136	148	380	1,295
Nevada	64	45	71	53	36	97	366
New Hampshire	34	87	129	50	58	88	446
New Jersey	198	836	382	206	48	525	2,195
New Mexico	48	34	29	53	69	430	663
New York	274	618	435	341	558	1,678	3,904
North Carolina	10	123	334	314	389	756	1,926
North Dakota	79	35	87	75	88	211	575
Ohio	247	803	927	239	390	1,030	3,636
Oklahoma	89	109	136	234	147	1,049	1,764
Oregon	73	68	259	159	241	384	1,184
Pennsylvania	246	623	620	353	226	1,061	3,129
Rhode Island	16	57	74	21	47	80	295
South Carolina	92	28	49	126	109	637	1,081
South Dakota	89	28	46	136	68	295	662
Tennessee	65	114	143	234	219	747	1,522
Texas	98	392	796	641	723	3,239	5,889
Utah	20	77	82	77	128	290	674
Vermont	52	48	45	58	28	87	318
Virginia	158	185	339	304	199	513	1,698
Washington	163	233	281	386	189	555	1,807
West Virginia	26	14	95	53	139	571	898
Wisconsin	95	369	492	303	253	502	2,014
Wyoming	67	47	51	83	60	104	412

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey, 1993-94. (This table was prepared October 1996.)

TABLE 11

Number of public schools by state and locale code, 1994-95

State	Total	Large city\1\	Mid-size city\2\	Urban fringe of a large city\3\	Urban fringe of a mid-size city\4\	Large town\5\	Small town\6\	Rural\7\
United States	64,700	10,743	12,658	18,591	8,606	1,558	11,989	22,555
Alabama	1,369	112	265	94	179	7	266	356
Alaska	478	0	61	0	0	30	57	270
Arizona	1,099	427	116	206	11	36	141	158
Arkansas	1,072	0	234	7	66	32	277	456
California	7,621	1,616	1,214	3,369	568	59	346	647
Colorado	1,407	217	176	416	25	26	162	365
Connecticut	1,039	1	267	217	219	29	134	172
Delaware	182	0	70	18	40	0	18	36
District of Columbia	174	174	0	0	0	0	0	0
Florida	2,726	433	606	506	537	16	174	252
Georgia	1,767	136	217	541	90	50	397	336
Hawaii	242	73	0	67	3	12	31	36
Idaho	600	0	66	0	30	65	164	255
Illinois	4,120	560	491	1,393	163	66	504	943
Indiana	1,860	186	384	324	140	60	296	470
Iowa	1,549	0	257	1	95	68	374	754
Kansas	1,490	110	162	156	10	58	290	484
Kentucky	1,342	107	133	115	92	53	325	417
Louisiana	1,459	123	341	158	223	21	236	57
Maine	701	0	57	3	68	0	166	407
Maryland	1,263	195	69	734	10	0	49	206
Massachusetts	1,800	116	366	628	97	33	326	436
Michigan	3,426	258	635	954	343	4	399	602
Minnesota	1,907	245	101	566	63	19	281	42
Mississippi	890	0	106	16	81	59	329	49
Missouri	2,098	252	154	464	55	27	336	400
Montana	899	0	67	0	15	38	200	479
Nebraska	1,395	127	56	42	11	23	323	413
Nevada	418	110	79	54	26	10	41	96
New Hampshire	458	0	57	55	3	14	99	230
New Jersey	2,295	68	183	1,602	93	18	150	181
New Mexico	712	120	64	32	19	88	166	223
New York	4,125	1,161	399	1,097	390	48	292	476
North Carolina	1,960	110	468	52	291	29	363	407
North Dakota	583	0	69	0	20	20	67	407
Ohio	3,684	545	548	810	426	72	423	400
Oklahoma	1,817	199	106	251	13	49	374	763
Oregon	1,209	124	154	303	63	34	256	475
Pennsylvania	3,120	401	348	764	474	30	384	419
Rhode Island	305	0	94	35	95	16	38	27
South Carolina	1,051	0	259	17	259	0	224	492
South Dakota	823	0	64	0	13	0	135	511
Tennessee	1,508	278	239	140	144	33	283	391
Texas	6,465	1,704	1,009	1,113	291	62	869	1,417
Utah	728	0	213	0	233	26	102	54
Vermont	371	0	17	0	16	0	82	36
Virginia	1,764	130	358	393	156	13	164	300
Washington	1,907	166	478	505	79	26	217	35
West Virginia	848	0	100	18	109	22	145	54
Wisconsin	2,030	157	373	237	155	27	338	44
Wyoming	404	0	62	0	5	10	134	53

\1\A central city of a CMSA or MSA, with the city having a population greater than or equal to 250,000.

\2\A central city of a CMSA or MSA, with the city having a population less than 250,000.

\3\Any incorporated place, CDP, or non-place territory within a CMSA or MSA of a large city and defined as urban by the Census Bureau.

\4\Any incorporated place, CDP, or non-place territory within a CMSA or MSA of a mid-size city and defined as urban by the Census Bureau.

\5\An incorporated place or CDP with a population greater than or equal to 25,000 and located outside a CMSA or MSA.

\6\An incorporated place or CDP with a population less than 25,000 and greater than or equal to 2,500 and located outside a CMSA or MSA.

\7\Any incorporated place, CDP, or non-place territory designated as rural by the Census Bureau.

NOTE: Excludes 1,514 schools not reporting enrollment data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data. (This table was prepared October 1996.)